

**The Fall 2021 Catalog of Courses  
from the Shared Learning Association**

**September 13, 2021 – December 17, 2021**

**THIS REVISED CATALOG REFLECTS CHANGES AS OF SEPT. 2**

**Welcome to Shared Learning, now situated at a NEW Chapel Hill location:  
Church of Reconciliation, 110 N. Elliott Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514**

We are offering a wide variety of courses, some for in-person ("on-site") participation at the Church of Reconciliation and some for remote ("Zoom") participation. We are also offering some courses that we call "hybrids," where people can choose to participate either on-site or by Zoom. For the hybrid courses, we ask people to register as either "on-site" or "Zoom" to give us an idea of where people will be. However, subject to room size limitations, with advance notice to the moderator people may switch between one mode of participation and the other. Supplementary information about some courses can be found at [sharedlearning.us/morecourseinfo](https://sharedlearning.us/morecourseinfo).

**Vaccination Requirement for  
Shared Learning Participation**

Shared Learning is resolved to do what it can to protect the health and well-being of our members. Therefore, to attend any Shared Learning on-site courses, lectures and meetings, we require that each individual be fully vaccinated for CoVid. At the same time, our association is built upon the trust and good will of our members. Thus, we only require that people affirm by marking a check-box on the registration form that they have been vaccinated.

**Face Masks**

At the time this catalog was published, it was still unclear about the extent to which the latest form of the CoVid virus will affect people who are vaccinated and how transmissible it is from vaccinated individuals. The policy regarding face masks that we implement in September (and beyond) will depend on what is learned in the meantime — that is, whether face masks are required of all, or required in certain situations, or totally an individual option. The Shared Learning website ([sharedlearning.us](https://sharedlearning.us)) will always have the latest policy prominently displayed.

**Registration Information**

Registration information is on the last page of this catalog. Mail a registration form and membership check for \$60 per person to Hank Becker, 1114 Phils Ridge Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27516, postmarked by Sept. 3. *If you have questions about any course, contact the moderator.* To receive a paper copy of this catalog, email [welcome@sharedlearning.us](mailto:welcome@sharedlearning.us). Our website: [sharedlearning.us](https://sharedlearning.us).

**MONDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**LANGUAGE BEGETS HUMANITY OR VICE VERSA? (On-site + Zoom)** Moderator: Barry Lentz ([uncbrl@gmail.com](mailto:uncbrl@gmail.com)). This two-semester course will draw on two *Great Courses* lecture series that address the science of language production, development of communication in infants, and its evolution in humans and other animals. Language requires a complex system of sensory inputs and responses all mediated by the brain. It is unclear whether language reflects a genetically programmed innate feature of the human brain (Chomsky/Pinker) or whether it is a remarkable adaptation of the human brain to the complex social behavior unique to humans (Christiansen/Chater). One series of lectures from the *Great Courses*, 2020, addresses the nature of human language from a modern neurological/psychological perspective, but glances over the essential linguistic concepts covered by another from *Great Courses*, 2008. We will attempt to blend these two approaches to provide a useful introduction to a complex subject that is currently evolving from an observational to an analytical science. I will provide a course syllabus but will hold this open for input from class participants who will have access to both sets of lectures via Drop Box, and my notes thereon. **NOTE:** \*Class size limits: on-site--15 people; Zoom--no limit.  
**ZOOM ONLY THRU 10/11**

**TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN CULTURE (On-site)** Greg Hesterberg ([greghesterberg@me.com](mailto:greghesterberg@me.com)). Winston Churchill once described Russia as “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Russia is European, but not Western, in Asia, but not Asian and is the largest “country” in the world, spanning 11 time zones — more like an empire than a nation. However there does exist a clear, distinct “Russian culture” that evolved during the past 600 years. Watching lectures from a *Great Courses* series will help you increase your understanding of current news from Russia. You will also increase your historical understanding by viewing and experiencing various facets of Russian culture that span art, music, theater, dance, literature, food and drink. In addition, Greg will host a visit by a Russian national who will present her life story of growing up and living in Moscow and the Crimea and will answer questions from a Russian perspective. The course will feature several other videos, including a walking tour of St. Petersburg and Moscow, all in 4K, and “eye candy” slides.  
**ZOOM THRU 10/11**

**VIEWS ON THE NEWS (On-site)** Co-moderators: Alice Parsons ([amparson@uci.edu](mailto:amparson@uci.edu)) & John Cocowitch ([jhcchc74@verizon.net](mailto:jhcchc74@verizon.net)). Our open round table format allows for the respectful discussion of events at the worldwide, national, state and local levels. During each meeting, a volunteer(s) presents current topics for the exchange of ideas, in order for us to share and learn. The conversations and information exchanges are respectfully managed by Alice and John, using pre-established general operation guidelines to ensure that meeting etiquette and decorum are followed. **NOTES:** \*Class is limited to 20 participants. \*Students new to this course are welcome. **ZOOM THRU 10/11**  
**CO-MOD: Doug Shier ([shierdrs@gmail.com](mailto:shierdrs@gmail.com)), Warren Ort ([warrensailo@aol.com](mailto:warrensailo@aol.com))**

**MONDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

**BARRY'S BOOK DISCUSSIONS (On-site + Zoom)** Moderator: Barry Lentz ([uncbrl@gmail.com](mailto:uncbrl@gmail.com)). We will read and discuss roughly 40-45 pages per week from two recent books: first, Andrew Yang's *The War on Normal People* (~ 240 pages and dense), and secondly, Pete Buttigieg's *Shortest Way Home* (~340 pages and a delightful read). Both authors are smart and recognize the significant social and political upheaval of our times, but posit different origins. Yang sees technology as both a hope and threat for the future; for Buttigieg, our greatest challenges are economic disparity and mistrust. Both authors were contenders for the presidency, but would approach the job very differently. You will need to purchase both books: Amazon: \$12 for new copies and \$0 for Kindle, \$14 and \$12 for paperback. This will be a discussion class with responsibility shared among participants. **NOTE:** \*Class size limits: on-site--15 people; Zoom--no limit.  
**ZOOM ONLY THRU 10/11**

~~**CONTROVERSIES: Why Nations Fail (On-site)** Moderator: Meyer Liberman ([mlliberman@nc.rr.com](mailto:mlliberman@nc.rr.com)). This is a seminar-type, discussion-oriented course, based on the careful reading of chapters in our well-reviewed, jointly-selected book: *WHY NATIONS FAIL: The Origins of Power, Productivity and Poverty*, by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. The authors posit conclusions based on careful research and analyses of both current nations and historic ones to determine what makes some nations rich and others poor. Our class members will spend class time discussing the validity of the authors' conclusions. Also, we'll supplement the book readings with articles and/or chapters to read for extra background. Participants will be expected to present and moderate at least one week's reading selection during the semester. **NOTE:** \*To promote discussion, class is limited to 15 participants.  
**CLASS IS FILLED ZOOM THRU 10/11**~~

**DISCOVERING THE SCIENCE OF INFORMATION (On-site)** Moderator: Daniel Kiechle ([daniel@kiechle.com](mailto:daniel@kiechle.com)). Never before have we been able to acquire, record, communicate, and use so many forms of information, and never have we had such a need to understand the concepts and principles of information. As a formal approach to knowledge, information science provides the basis for computer science and modern communications, but it is also central to our understanding of the natural world, human language, images, sounds, and more. Our topics include: discussions of entropy, error-correcting codes, signals and bandwidth, among others, with the course proceeding from simple questions (what is information?) to more complex insights (understanding redundancy). Most sessions will include one or two 30-minute lectures from *Great Courses* with pauses to clarify and discuss the ideas presented. Not all 24 lectures will be used; the moderator and the participants will jointly decide which lectures to skip. **NOTE:** \*This course begins the week of **September 20**.  
**ZOOM THRU 10/11**

**TUESDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**TUESDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

**HOW TO READ THE BIBLE, Part III**

**(On-site)** Moderator: Rabbi Jonathan Gerard ([jhgerard@gmail.com](mailto:jhgerard@gmail.com)). This course will complete a survey of Biblical literature, initially presented by former Harvard professor James Kugel, but now led primarily by Rabbi Gerard. Each class will examine one specific book in the third and final section of the Hebrew Bible to be canonized (in the year 200 CE) — and titled *Ketuvim, The Writings*. Each of these “books” is a literary gem which we will examine from both a historical and literary point of view: *Jonah, Ruth, Esther, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Psalms*, and, finally, the magnificent and profoundly unique *Book of Job*. While I have designed the course around seven sessions, they may spill over and lengthen our term — depending upon class discussion. We will have time to consider additional suggestions and requests from students, should they wish to discuss biblical books or topics not covered in this curriculum. **NOTES:** \*To aid discussion, participants are asked to bring in their home Bibles for every meeting. \*New students are welcome.

**ZOOM THRU 10/12**

**THE WILMINGTON COUP OF 1898 – ITS LESSONS FOR TODAY (On-site + Zoom)**

Moderator: Hank Becker ([hjbecker@uci.edu](mailto:hjbecker@uci.edu)). This event was the most violent, unconstitutional usurpation of power in post-Civil-War American history. Why haven't most Carolinians known about it until recently? How could a badge for "white supremacy" be regarded as honorable so that people wore and still wear it openly and aggressively? How did both racism and partisan political competition contribute to what happened? What implications does this story have for today's politics in NC and the US, especially in the rural South? We will read from the 2021 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Wilmington's Lie* by David Zucchino (\$18 new purchase) and from downloadable articles and book chapters.) Also, the class will incorporate a discussion of other events in recent North Carolina politics in order to understand the book's continuing relevance for today. In particular, class members will be expected to listen as a private study assignment to a five-part audio podcast from the *NY Times' Serial Productions* about racial politics in rural Bladen County NC. **NOTES:** \*Class participants will be expected to purchase *Wilmington's Lie* by David Zucchino (\$18 new purchase) and read a majority of its chapters. \*Class size limits: on-site--15 people; Zoom--no limit. **ZOOM ONLY THRU 10/12**

**BECOMING A BETTER PROBLEM SOLVER (Zoom)** Moderator: Jeanne Hillson ([jeanne.hillson@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.hillson@gmail.com)). In this course, we'll explore and practice the mindset and tools of deliberate creativity; that is, the ability to think more flexibly and imaginatively when faced with a challenge — be it planning a strategy, resolving a conflict, generating options or maneuvering through a change. Through a combination of lectures from *Great Courses* and occasional material from my prior creativity training and coaching practice, you can expect to: \*learn about different styles of creativity, \*energize your imagination, and \*practice the various stages of creative problem-solving via work on hypothetical and actual challenges of your own. Most of our meetings will combine lecture, discussion, and activities, with an invitation to apply your learning between sessions. As each class builds on the last, please plan to attend every week. **NOTES:** \*You'll never be required to share a personal challenge, but you will benefit from hearing different perspectives on whatever you present. \*Class size is limited to **16**.

**THE EUROPEAN THEATER IN WORLD WAR II (Zoom)** Moderator: Steve Bravy ([sbravy7@gmail.com](mailto:sbravy7@gmail.com)). People our age have heard of the major battles of World War II in Europe — the Battle of Britain, Moscow, Stalingrad, D-Day, and so forth. This course discusses those battles, but goes considerably further. We will view videos from a *Great Courses* lecture series, and will also read Steve's explanation of the more strategic aspects of the war — military doctrines and practices, resources, logistics, and production. Technical weapon capabilities and technological advances will also be presented because, if your weapons are ineffective, then your deployments, doctrines, resources and production won't really matter much. Such supplementary details will be provided electronically before each meeting. During our meetings we will view two 30-minute lectures and discuss questions about all the videos. In general, questions and comments will be welcomed and encouraged before, between and after the video presentations.

**LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE (On-site + Zoom)** Co-moderators: Alan Ziegler ([alanzieg2@gmail.com](mailto:alanzieg2@gmail.com)) & Neil Stahl ([nstahlgm@gmail.com](mailto:nstahlgm@gmail.com)). Are we alone in this giant universe? What are the prospects for finding life, either simple or perhaps intelligent, in our solar system or neighboring systems? This *Great Courses* lecture series will explore the possibilities. In addition we will explore and discuss evolving technology and expanding knowledge. During most meetings, we will cover two lectures on most days, allowing some time for discussion. **ZOOM ONLY THRU 10/12**  
\*Class size limits: on-site--15 people; Zoom--no limit.

**PROUSTIAN SPINOFF: COUSIN BETTE BY BALZAC (On-site)** Moderator: Nancy Goudreau ([nagoudreau@yahoo.com](mailto:nagoudreau@yahoo.com)). This year, we continue our delectation of Marcel Proust by delving into the literature that greatly influenced him. Our first selection is by Honore' de Balzac, *Cousin Bette*, originally published in 1846 and translated by Silvia Raphael, Oxford World Classics Series, 528 pages. ([www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) offers new and used books at reasonable prices.) Considered to be Balzac's last great work, the plot explores themes of vice and virtue in Paris in the early 1800's, as well as the influence of money in the French society of the time. It follows Bette, an unattractive spinster who seeks to destroy her extended family by scheming with a beautiful, but unhappily married young woman — to seduce and torment Bette's male relatives. Prior to the class meeting, each participant will have read about 25 pages of text, portions of which will be read aloud in class and discussed in detail. **NOTES:** \*Students do NOT need to have read Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* beforehand. \*Enrollment is limited to **12** students. **CLASS STARTS 10/19**



**WEDNESDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**WEDNESDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

**AMERICA'S LONG STRUGGLE AGAINST SLAVERY I**

**(On-site)** Co-moderators: Joe Swain ([joeswain359@gmail.com](mailto:joeswain359@gmail.com)) & Jack Narayan ([inarayan@gmail.com](mailto:inarayan@gmail.com)). Current debates over race relations in America identify the origin of our disputes from the introduction of slavery to the British colony of Virginia in 1619. But, while slavery took hold in the economics, politics and society of what would become the United States, it was opposed by many, almost from its start. Some in Africa benefited from the slave trade, while others fiercely resisted. In Colonial America, those who promoted slavery and the infamous Middle Passage clashed with those who found it repugnant, often on religious grounds. In fact, when the USA achieved independence, the struggle over slavery greatly influenced our founding documents and expansion across the continent, polarizing debates that eventually led to the Civil War. Even the victory of the Union did not resolve the question of what to do about the legacy of 250 years of slavery. This class will follow a *Great Courses* lecture series that will investigate: \*the debates of powerful policy makers like Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison; \*the lives and efforts of common people, Black and White, involved in this struggle; \*the implications for our times. During each meeting the moderators will supplement the one or two lectures with outside reading and video clips to encourage discussion. **NOTE:** \*Class is limited to **20** participants.

**ZOOM THRU 10/13**

**LIBERTY IN THE AMERICAN LEGAL TRADITION**

**(Zoom)** Moderator: Hank Becker ([hjbecker@uci.edu](mailto:hjbecker@uci.edu)). As used in the U.S. Constitution, liberty means freedom from arbitrary and unreasonable restraint upon an individual. But when is restraint on freedom advisable or even necessary? We will view most of the set of 24 *Great Courses* lectures called "Liberty on Trial in America" (by the same law professor who lectured in the "Great Trials" course in 2019-2020). The cases discussed will include trials of: John Peter Zenger, John Brown, Susan B. Anthony, the Scopes trial, flag salute cases, Japanese internment, segregation cases, miscegenation, the Pentagon Papers, Roe v. Wade, Ruby Ridge, Dr. Kevorkian, the Boy Scouts prohibition of gay leaders, eminent domain seizure of property, and Citizens United. Although our moral sense of right vs. wrong will be raised by these cases, our discussion will attempt to see both viewpoints: the essential value of individual liberty vs. constraints, designed to foster a strong social community and an equitable political system. Hank will show one to two videos per class.

**EXPANDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF 19th & Early 20th CENTURY**

**OPERA (Zoom)** Moderator: Peggy Stevermer ([pstevermer@nc.rr.com](mailto:pstevermer@nc.rr.com)). Opera is for many music lovers the ultimate musical form, and a base for many of the elements of the performing arts, i.e.: acting, scenery, costume and sometimes dance or ballet, as well as orchestral, choral and solo music. If you enjoy musical theater, think about "taking the plunge" to explore the world of opera. Though this course is a continuation from the winter and spring semesters, it is certainly not necessary that you joined us then. Using a variety of videos, recordings and period drawings/paintings, we will explore operas written in the late 19th century and into the early 20th century. In particular, we'll delve into a study of the composers and the librettists - their lives and inspiration, as well as examining the musical experience and what makes opera the musical art form that is now experiencing the most growth. We will focus on the most famous and/or interesting operas of composers, such as, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Debussy, – enjoying their stories, the music and their collaborators. **NOTES:** \*New students are welcome. \*Class is limited to **17** participants.

**THE REAL HISTORY OF SECRET SOCIETIES (On-site)**

Co-moderators: Alan Ziegler ([alanzieg2@gmail.com](mailto:alanzieg2@gmail.com)), ~~Sept. 15 – Oct. 6;~~ & Anne-Marie Durand-Kennett ([mayamdk@aol.com](mailto:mayamdk@aol.com)), Oct. 13 – Dec. 15. The establishment of secret societies is as old as civilization. Most don't hide their existence, but do hide the activities that they sponsor. They are selective in participants, a quality that drives much of their appeal. Secret societies have attracted some of history's most brilliant minds, along with some of its most depraved. Through *Great Courses* lectures (one / two per meeting) and discussion, we will: \*discover the history, doctrines and meaning of secret societies; \*explore the most infamous, such as, the Illuminati or the Knights Templar, as well as the more obscure Priory of Sion or the Elect.; and \*examine Gnostics, Manicheans, Assassins, Cathars, Rosicrucians, Freemasons and more. The course will reveal how secret societies have influenced history, religion, politics and popular culture from ancient times to the present. Also, you will learn that secret societies aren't freakish sideshows in history. Rather, they have been and continue to be at the very heart of it. **NOTE:** \*Class is limited to **20** participants.

**CLASS STARTS OCT. 20**

**SPANISH CONVERSATION (Zoom)** Co-moderators: Michael Hardy & Bob Schreiner ([bob\\_schreiner@unc.edu](mailto:bob_schreiner@unc.edu)). This course presents an opportunity to improve your spoken Spanish. It is aimed at advanced beginning or intermediate-level speakers. We talk about anything we want, such as, current events, books and movies we've read or seen, and places we have visited. Sometimes a member will distribute a Spanish article in advance for review at the next session. We are a friendly, welcoming group of people at varying levels of fluency. **NOTE:** \*Limited to **10** people with priority for participants from the previous term.

**WEDNESDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**READING & DISCUSSING GREAT SHORT STORIES**

**(Zoom)** Moderator: Marcy Sacarakis ([marcy4479@gmail.com](mailto:marcy4479@gmail.com)). Class members will discuss one story each week from *The Best American Short Stories*, 2019 which is available for purchase from local bookstores or Amazon. We will participate in in-depth discussions about the author, writing style, plot, characters, the development of themes and the story's relevance to us. Members of the class will take turns leading the discussion. Each class ends with a poetry reading, chosen by a class member. **NOTE:** \*Class is limited to **15**, with preference given to returning members.

**WRITING & SHARING PERSONAL HISTORY (On-site)**

Moderator: Mary Freedman ([maryafreedman@gmail.com](mailto:maryafreedman@gmail.com)). Only we can document our personal experiences, reactions and perceptions during such dynamic times. We will support each other's individual efforts to record in writing what we have lived through and to encourage and aid our developing sense of accomplishments. All will: \*write beforehand about episodes and decisions made in our lives; \*read aloud our writing; \*listen to everyone; and \*appreciate the telling of the experience(s) and/or insights. Also, we will be able to share illustrations and photos online. **NOTES:** \*Class is limited to **15** participants. \*Students new to this course are welcome. **ZOOM THRU 10/13**

**WEDNESDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

**WEDNESDAY SHARED LEARNING BOOK CLUB, (On-site)**

Leader: Terry Lucas ([tlucas47@mac.com](mailto:tlucas47@mac.com)). Please join Shared Learning friends and new acquaintances to discuss group-selected current and classic books and...with your choice of two meeting options...sessions on two different days. (New participants are welcome in either Wednesday or Friday groups.) On the **first Friday of the month**, meetings for the **Friday Book Club** will be held via **Zoom**, 9:15 – 10:45. On the **first Wednesday of the month**, 11:15 – 12:45, the **Wednesday Book Club** meetings will be held on-site, in a classroom at the Church of Reconciliation. Group members lead discussions that are focused on the group sharing of views and thoughts — both sets of meetings do not try to duplicate a graduate degree analysis of the book. Book selection for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 have been made by this past spring's members...see below. Some discussion leaders have been identified and the others will be determined at the first meetings. Please email Terry with questions.

**CANCELLED -- SEE FRIDAY FOR ZOOM BOOK CLUB**

**For THE WEDNESDAY SHARED LEARNING Book Club, on-site, First Wednesdays, 11:15 – 12:45, the meeting dates and selected books are:**

- \* October 6 — *Commonwealth*, Ann Patchett (Terry Lucas).
- \* November 3 — *Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell (need volunteer).
- \* December 1 — *Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Christie Lefteri (need volunteer).
- \* February 2 — *The Waterdancer* by Ta Nehisi Coates (need volunteer).
- \* March 2 — *So Big*, Edna Ferber (need volunteer).
- \* April 6 — *Straight Man*, Richard Russo (need volunteer).

**For the FRIDAY SHARED LEARNING BOOK CLUB, via Zoom, the First Fridays of the Month, 9:15 – 10:45, see Friday's listing.**

**LINDGREN LECTURES**

**First in the series: "EPIGENETICS" with Brian Strahl**

Professor and Interim Chair, Dept. of Biochemistry & Biophysics, UNC School of Medicine

*Date/time/location to be determined:*

~~ETHER~~ **Friday, Oct. 22nd, via Zoom, at 11:15 a.m.**

~~OR~~ **Monday, Oct. 25th on-site at the Church at 1:15 p.m.**

Remaining dates: all at 1:15 p.m. at the Church of Reconciliation  
Monday, January 24, Monday, February 28, Monday, March 28

**THURSDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**THURSDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

**AFTER THE GUNS FALL SILENT – UNDERSTANDING THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE CONFLICT (On-site)**

Co-moderators: Bisharah Libbus ([blibbus@gmail.com](mailto:blibbus@gmail.com)) and Steve Bravy ([sbravy7@gmail.com](mailto:sbravy7@gmail.com)). After every flare up in Israel and/or Palestine, people shrug: “There they go again. There is no solution to this conflict,” or “They have been fighting for millennia.” Both comments miss the mark. In an effort to understand the history of the conflict, we will turn to historical documents from the eighteenth century to the present. This course is heavy on reading and discussion, with an emphasis on understanding, not arguments or debate. We start our study with Christian Zionism in the 18th century, then move on to Jewish Zionism in late 18th century. Then we will proceed to the following topics: \*the maneuvering of the world powers after WWI; \*the mandate of the League of Nations; \*the Partition Plan for Palestine; \*establishment of the State of Israel; \*and the ensuing wars. Finally, we will look at Palestinian movement and the current occupation of the West Bank. This course is not for the weary. Come prepared to read, listen and probe.

ZOOM THRU 10/14

**SHARED LEARNING PHOTOGRAPHY SEMINAR (Zoom)**

Moderator: Glenn Wrighton. Novice and expert photographers will meet to explore photographic topics selected by the group, as well as photos taken by participants. Topics areas may include photo editing, tips for taking photos, digital camera technology and sharing photos – explored with lecture, videos, discussion and live demonstration as appropriate. **NOTES:** \*Every **OTHER** Thursday, beginning September 17<sup>th</sup>. \*Students new to this course are welcome.

**HOW BIG DATA ANALYTICS IS TRANSFORMING THE WORLD (On-site + Zoom)**

Co-moderators: Doug Shier ([shierdrs@gmail.com](mailto:shierdrs@gmail.com)) and Hank Becker ([hjbecker@uci.edu](mailto:hjbecker@uci.edu)). The last 15 years have seen astronomical increases in the amount of digital data collected and stored on computers. A *Great Courses* lecture series provides a non-technical way to see how patterns identified in that data are used to improve predictions, decision-making, and our understanding of people and social systems. Applications discussed in the lectures include (among many others) political polling, sports, motion picture animation, Internet search ranking, textual analysis, and analysis of social networks. Approaches include: \*graphical summarization; \*statistical methods; \*simulation and modeling; \*decision trees; \*and machine learning. One to two lectures will be screened each week, with the pace determined by class members' needs and interests. **NOTE:** \*Class size limits: on-site--15 people; Zoom--no limit.

ZOOM ONLY THRU 10/14

**FILM APPRECIATION – A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING (On-site)**

Moderator: Dan Brenner ([dbrennervid@gmail.com](mailto:dbrennervid@gmail.com)). In this class, we will try to answer the question, “what makes a good film?” Is it critical acclaim, winning awards or box office success? From independent to foreign films, 1940’s to present-day productions, all will be character-driven with complex and interesting plot lines. We will explore different genres, compare directing styles and examine story arcs and plot development. In addition, we’ll note how technology has influenced the filmmaking process and, in turn, impacted content and style. We will discuss: \*the relationship between the script; \*the director’s vision; \*the cinematography; \*editing; \*and ultimately, what we view on the screen. Some directors will include: the Coen Brothers, John Sayles, Spike Lee, Stanley Kramer, and John Huston. Each week, we’ll begin with a brief introduction, highlighting the director, screenwriter, actors and cinematographer, plus a few production notes and trivia. Then, we will view a film in its entirety, followed with discussion of various aspects. **NOTES:** \*Each class meeting may last until 1:30, depending on the length of the film. \*Class is limited to 17 participants.

CLASS IS FILLED

**INTO THE AFTERLIFE: THE INFERNO FROM DANTE’S DIVINE COMEDY, PART I (On-site)**

CANCELLED

Moderator: Nancy Goudreau ([nagoudreau@yahoo.com](mailto:nagoudreau@yahoo.com)). In the Middle Ages, the most celebrated Italian poet, Dante Alighieri (1262 – 1321), reacted to his long bitter exile from Florence by writing his culminating master work, the *Divine Comedy*...in three volumes: the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradisio*. This ‘organization of the afterlife’ was inspired because of his: \*extensive tangles with brutal Italian political and social turbulence; \*admiration for Aeneas’s underworld journey in Virgil’s *Aeneid*; \*compulsion to probe the character of tainted, deceased politicians/military/clergy and contemporaries; \*desperation to understand human failings, the Roman Catholic religion, and the purpose of his life. During this semester, we will gain basic knowledge of the Italian Middle Ages and Dante’s place in it. Nancy may show portions from *Great Courses* lectures. We will read aloud and interpret sections of the *Inferno* from a weekly 20-page reading assignment, while Dante as Hero travels through the nine rings of Hell (*Inferno*), viewing horrific and graphic punishments for sinners and chatting with them about their justifications, bitterness, pain. (In PART II, in Winter 2022, we’ll join Dante as he travels in the same manner into Purgatory with lesser pain. Our text is translated by Robert Hollander, 2000, Anchor Books. Students are invited to contribute historic, religious, and cultural information. **NOTES:** \*Used texts for reasonable prices can be purchased from [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) – search in ‘advanced search,’ for a front cover scene of hellish torture. \*It will be helpful if you are familiar with Books IV, V and VI in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, any translation.

**REVIEWING TWELVE ESSENTIAL SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS (On-site)**

Moderator: Bisharah Libbus ([blibbus@gmail.com](mailto:blibbus@gmail.com)). Have you yearned to have an overview of the scientific ideas that are involved in taking a hot air balloon ride, surveying the landscape and enjoying the features? A cognitive neuroscientist from the *Great Courses* will provides such a tour. In 24 lectures, she will cover such topics as: \*the organization of life; \*evolution; \*DNA and heritability; \*the illusion of coherence; \*our changing brain; \*navigation; \*fluid mechanics and propulsion; \*string theory; \*Cardano; \*Viète and more. In each class period, we will review two lectures and make time for group discussion. Join us for a wonderful smorgasbord of a course.

ZOOM THRU 10/14

**FRIDAYS 9:15 am – 10:45 am**

**DEUTSCHE KONVERSATIONS GRUPPE (Zoom)** Moderator: Andrew O'Brien ([a.obrien@hotmail.com](mailto:a.obrien@hotmail.com)). For those German speakers who wish to maintain their fluency, this course will provide you with informal and cordial opportunities to converse in German. We'll refer to articles in German newspapers, magazines and select interesting topics about current German and American events. Each class meeting will be conducted entirely in German, but not include German grammar instructions. **NOTE:** \*German speakers new to this course are welcome.

**FRIDAY SHARED LEARNING BOOK CLUB (Zoom)** Leader: Terry Lucas ([tlucas47@mac.com](mailto:tlucas47@mac.com)). Please join Shared Learning friends and new acquaintances to discuss group-selected current and classic books...with your choice of two meeting options...sessions on two different days. (New participants are welcome.) On the first Friday of the month, meetings for the **FRIDAY BOOK CLUB** will be held via Zoom, 9:15 – 10:45, while, on the first Wednesday of the month, 11:15 – 12:45, the on-site meetings will be held in a classroom at the Church of Reconciliation. Group members lead discussions that are focused on the group sharing of views and thoughts – both sets of meetings do not try to duplicate a graduate degree analysis of the book. Book selection for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 have been made by this past spring's members...see below. Some discussion leaders have been identified and the others will be determined at the first meetings. Please email Terry with questions.

- \*October 1 – *Commonwealth*, Ann Patchett (Terry Lucas).
- \*November 5 – *Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell (need volunteer).
- \*December 3 – *Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Christie Lefteri (need volunteer).
- \*February 4 – *The Waterdancer* by Ta Nehisi Coates (need volunteer).
- \*March 4 – *So Big*, Edna Ferber (need volunteer).
- \*April 1 – *Straight Man*, Richard Russo (need volunteer).

~~For the **WEDNESDAY SHARED LEARNING BOOK CLUB, on-site, the First Wednesdays of the Month, 11:15 – 12:45, see the listing on Wednesday.**~~

**FRIDAYS 11:15 am – 12:45 pm**

~~**EXPLORING BREAKTHROUGH IDEAS THAT CHANGED ART (Zoom)** Moderator: Bonnie Sullivan ([bonniesull@gmail.com](mailto:bonniesull@gmail.com)). Rather than studying a particular art movement such as Impressionism, this class will delve into art another way – at each meeting, we'll look at how a breakthrough idea impacted art through history. Thus, a class examining WALL PAINTINGS might include: prehistoric cave paintings; 13th century BCE Egyptian tomb art; a mid-1900s Diego Rivera mural. EQUESTRIAN IMAGES might include: a mid-1400s Donatello bronze monument; an early 1500s Durer print; a late 1800s Muybridge photograph. MOSAICS: early 100 CE Roman floors; the interior of an 11th century Byzantine basilica; tile work at the Alhambra (13th-15th centuries). We'll explore the ideas that changed art across cultures and spend time employing the *Slow Looking* process used by the National Gallery of Art. Video presentations (Khan Academy, art museum productions) will enrich our knowledge. By deeply observing two / three pieces per class, members will learn how to approach and appreciate any work of art, resulting in a more rewarding experience. Also the practice of *Slow Looking* will sharpen class members' observation skills, an ability that enhances everyday life.~~

**NOTE:** \*Class is limited to 24 participants.

**CLASS IS FILLED**

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Fall 2021 through Spring 2022**

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